

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 15, 2005

To: Greg Carpenter

From: Mercedes McLemore

Subject: Minutes from August 10, 2005 LCWSG Meeting

Roll Call:

Sonia Pawluczyk, Alamitos Heights Improvement Association
Joan McGrath, Belmont Shores Mobile Estates
Thomas Marchese, UPENA
Sam Smock, Pacific Villas HOA
Lisa Rinaldi, Pacific Villas HOA
Denis Craig, Island Village
Ann Denison, College Park Estates
Mike Pugh, College Park Estates
Janice Dahl, UPENA
(Chairman) Ric Trent, Save Our Bay

City of Long Beach:

Greg Carpenter
Mercedes McLemore

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER—6:05 p.m.

Public Comments

CJ Hentzen from Island Village asked to speak. He stated that City of Long Beach acts poor, but is not. He believes that it would be nice to have a Home Depot, because he shops there all the time. However, he does not feel that the proposed store is a good plan. We do not need a shopping center, because there are already four (4) within a half mile. He reiterated that he is just an observer, not a study group member nor naturalist. But he looks at Huntington Beach and other places, wondering why we can't have that type of atmosphere here in Long Beach. He thinks the city can do better, and this whole issue weighs on the City planners and other departments. He is tired of hearing that we need money, and believes that we need to learn how to develop low land restoration instead. The residents are going to lose by being congested and burdened, while the City of Long Beach and developers will benefit.

Meeting Open for Staff Comments—NONE

Speaker Presentation:

Chairman Ric Trent opened the discussion by introducing the guest speaker, Don May of Earth Corps, to the study group. He then reminded the group that the presentation would go first, with questions following. Mr. May opened his presentation by explaining

the purpose of his organization to the group, and starting a PowerPoint presentation. Earth Corps is a 501C nonprofit organization that does lots of work in wetlands restoration. It was originally part of the Sierra Club, and later broke away to become a separate organization. Earth Corps is still involved in restoration work and other things worldwide. It has looked at toxic emissions and various other environmental issues. According to Mr. May, Earth Corps has been involved in such issues since the 1960s in both Long Beach and Orange County ever since.

Mr. May stated that the wetlands are an important area because it is a gateway to the San Gabriel Watershed. The estuary is a critical foundation for restoration. This is considered a scenic watershed, and so it is eligible for lots of restoration funding. He showed the group a map of the wetlands area, including the Edison right-of-way, El Dorado, Los Alamitos Corridor, Coyote Creek, Los Cerritos Estuary, Rossmore Retention Basin, etc. Mr. May told the group that the wetlands are also used by lots of "little critters." He stated that if the estuary is to be restored, one should start at the beginning (or mouth) of the San Gabriel River. According to Mr. May, the U.S. has lost half of its wetlands, California has lost 95%, and Long Beach has lost approximately 99.3% of the wetlands. Of 6500 acres that used to exist, only 45 remain. There are several factors that contributed to this phenomenon. Mr. May showed the group a slide that listed some of these factors.

He went on to show the group a photo of the three "prime properties" in the Los Cerritos Wetlands. According to him, the Bryant property is most important, and has the least remediation problems. There is very little contamination on that property, and the Land Trust is currently handling the acquisition of this property.

Next, Mr. May showed the group a picture of some degraded wetland on the Bixby property. He told the group that on this site, there are alternating layers of old sulfinated asphalt. He went on to show the group a photo of the Hellman property. There are dredge spoils from the San Gabriel River and Los Alamitos spread all over this property. Mr. May said that a good part that restoration expense would be the disposal of these spoils.

Mr. May told the group that Earth Corps completed a study on the wetlands, and he brought hard copies as well as CD ROMs. The study was completed in engineer's terms to figure out what all needed to be done for restoration, and to estimate a "restoration price tag." He informed the group that this study has aerial photographs of the area, and are very detailed. Most of the wetlands are in a liquefaction zone, so it would be difficult to construction permanent structures in that area. Mr. May informed the group that within the report there is a description of the restoration potential for the area, a hydraulic model for full tidal condition, a grading plan, and phasing of restoration.

Mr. May went on to tell the group that oil production in the Studebaker/2nd Street area is currently deed restricted, but they have a right to complete oil production for the next fifteen (15) years after which it can be sold/transferred/etc. There is a burn dump nearby, which is very problematic because these are used for burning waste. He informed the group that there was also lots of municipal rubble, and another burn site nearby that has caused difficulties in Seal Beach. He then pointed out the SEADIP line and portion of the wetlands that are within the City of Long Beach boundary. Mr. May noted that this land meets both state and federal criteria to be deemed a wetland.

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Mr. May was asked if Earth Corps had any involvement in the land located on the Northeast corner of Studebaker and Second Street. He responded yes, and briefly explained the History of the litigation with Southern California Edison relative to this property.

Next, Mr. May was asked if, in his pursuit of funding, he had been approached to sell off bits and pieces that would allow better access from Second Street onto Studebaker. This study group member explained that this was a claim made by a developer to the study group in a prior meeting, and he just wanted confirmation. Mr. May responded that this was the first time he had heard of this proposal.

The presentation continued with Mr. May showing the group Phase I of the Bryant restoration. He stated that the biggest problem faced thus far has been removing the levees, which belong to the Corps of Engineers. He told the group an estimated cost for restoring this area, as well as the cost for the other two phases of this property, which is roughly \$75million. The other side of the wetlands consists of problematic land as well. On the Hellman property, there is oil residual found. On the Bixby side of the wetlands, Mr. May told the group that Marina Shores is proposing a Best Buy as well as a Whole Foods store. When asked if he knew the status of this proposal, Greg Carpenter informed the group that the applicant is currently handling wetlands issues. Mr. May stated that if the property cannot be acquired, the back half might still be.

He went on to describe the western wetlands, which he said biologically is very important as a mixing zone. Mr. May informed the group that the most interesting things happen at the intersection of fresh and salt water. Locations such as these support a very large diversity of plants and animals. Mr. May then told the group that from Phase I to Phase II, the problems are minimal. From Phase II to Phase II remediation will be most difficult, because there are five (5) burn dumps and thus, the highest cost of remediation. Mr. May was not specific, but mentioned that there are problems in the Belmont Shore Mobile Home Estates, on Loynes, and even branching out into the Homes adjacent to this area. He said that between Loynes and the channel here are uses that some people have voiced interest in purchasing. This area is a bit more fragile than the wetlands as a whole.

Next, Mr. May was asked what the time frame was before attaching the L.A. retarding basin to this area. His estimate was roughly between ten (10) and fifteen (15) years. He believes that if you clamp this area to sea level, there will not be nearly as many problems as existing in past years. However, there are some complications that may postpone this action. For one, although there has been no opposition to the Rossmore basin, this is clearly an enhancement project. There are really only two options for wetland property. One could either make it a treatment facility or restore it to its full wetland potential. He noted that treatment facilities require more maintenance than restoration.

Mr. May informed the group that approximately 547 restorable acres are considered acquirable from Earth Corps. This includes the wetlands and some surrounding properties as well. He completed his presentation by showing the group several photos of the wetlands, including an aerial view at high water time and acreage of restored wetland in Seal Beach. The PowerPoint presentation and conceptual restoration plan will be available on the LCWSG website.

Once he finished his presentation, the questions and comments period began. First, a group member stated that they had filed a complaint regarding a toxic dumpsite located on the Bixby property, requesting that remediation take place. Mr. May responded by stating that somebody is going to have to remediate the site at some time. Samples have been taken, and there does not appear to be any leakage. Everyone that Mr. May talked to believes that it is stable. Until there is a good idea of what to do there, no one really wants to deal with the land. Mr. May said, if seriously contaminated, there is a condition that until the site is remediated, no building permits will be issued within a half mile of this site.

Next, Mr. May was asked how proposals such as Home Depot, Seaport Marina, etc. fit into this vision of the wetlands. Mr. May answered that from an environmental perspective, expanding Studebaker would result in disaster. It would divide the wetlands and cause all sorts of problems. Extending Studebaker would make it a major thoroughfare. Although that doesn't have much to do with restoration, he feels that it would be a bad way to go for several reasons, such as public safety. Earth Corps has had problems with Marina Shore West because for a while there was not a clear-cut definition of what a wetlands was at the Conservation Core. He was next asked for his opinion of the other projects in the area, such as Home Depot. Mr. May replied that he does not know why Home Depot has considered the location that it did. Home Depot has considered several other properties there, and since there is another store located almost across the street in Seal Beach, he doesn't see a market demand for it. He continued on to say that common sense typically goes farther than marketing studies. Although the site is not officially deemed as wetlands, there are burrowing owls and other fairly rare species in the area. Mr. May used the slender salamander as an example, which was thought to have disappeared from the area and "suddenly" appeared on the site. He doesn't hold much immediate hope for getting the tank farm out of the area, and there is still a huge remediation problem in the area. But in Mr. May's opinion, there just aren't good neighboring uses for a Home Depot. There are sewage issues in the area, and there is not enough capacity to handle the existing and projected problems.

When asked for his opinion of the Lennar/Seaport Marina project, Mr. May informed the group that this site is zoned for a hotel. He believes that if appropriately mitigated, it may not be such a bad idea. He's not so concerned for the wetlands because there aren't many impacts to the wetlands for either of these projects. There are simply indirect impacts that will result by factors such as traffic, overpopulation, etc. The Chairman Ric Trent then told Mr. May that the group believed that a temporary moratorium should be placed on development in SEADIP until the whole area is reviewed. He asked Mr. May if he thought their recommendation to overarch SEADIP and redefine this area was a good idea. Mr. May replied that the recommendation is a fundamental environmental concept, looking at the cumulative rather than site-by-site. A large amount of funding that is given for wetland restoration is often spent on studies. This expense can go as high as 2/3 of the funding. Despite this high price tag, Mr. May felt the recommendation was not a bad idea.

Mr. May concluded his discussion by telling the group that he feels that what's in the gene pool is of great value to human beings. There are species whose populations have virtually been stripped, everywhere except Los Cerritos Wetlands. He believes that one day we are going to have an illness that we needed treatment for, and we'll look back in

our gene pool only to realized that we've killed of the species that very well could have saved lives.

Other Issues

Before moving on, the minutes from July were approved.

Ric Trent informed the group that it is now time to "wrap up" the group and get a final report completed. He believes that this deserves a little more time than what is available at tonight's meeting, but he feels that the group needs to start scheduling public input if they feel it is necessary. He proposed that the group organize a well-publicized meeting for other people to attend and voice their feelings. This feedback is to be recorded and included in the final report. After brief discussion regarding possible locations and meeting times, the group agreed to use the September meeting to start drafting a document. The tentative date for the community meeting is Wednesday, October 5, 2005 from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. at Rogers Middle School. Each individual study group member is responsible for handling their association noticing. A press release will be completed in addition to such noticing. Next meeting Date is September 14, 2005

Meeting Adjourned at 8:40 p.m.